

of where one resides, if they can pay or have insurance. They are vital in insuring that America's forgotten are being kept healthy.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Chairman, I rise as a sixth generation Utahn. I come from the West, and I come from a State with public lands. Quite frankly, public lands in the West are what this issue is all about. I have grown up with a legacy of the use of those public lands in my State. My roots are in southern Utah.

Utah is a remarkable State. It is like a lot of the Western States, and it has got a lot of remarkable public lands, some places that are very special. As time has evolved, a lot of people around the world have discovered those lands as well; and I think it is safe to say, and I think there would be consensus at some point, that there is a lot of land out there that is worthy of protection because of its remarkable value.

When I talk about the public lands debate, I know tonight we are talking about the issue of RS 2477 and designation of roads, but it is really part of the overall public lands debate we have in our State and in the West. I look back over my lifetime about how that debate has been carried out. When I think about it, I think about so much emotion and so much effort that has gone into this debate, but there has been no progress. I am alarmed by the lack of progress.

As the West continues to grow and the population grows and the pressures develop, it is time for us to try to come together and try to make progress on these issues and resolve these issues as best we can.

There are not just two sides to this issue. It is not that simple. There are multiple stakeholders involved in public land matters in Utah and in the West. I have talked to so many of them. Quite frankly, I have talked to a lot of them just during this week in preparation and anticipation of the amendment from the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) that would be introduced today.

I have talked to county commissioners throughout rural Utah, and there is not unanimity among that group, quite frankly. There is a divergence of opinion. I have talked to all kinds of stakeholders. The sportsmen community, the recreation community.

There are many different points of view, and these points of view all have legitimate claims, and it is unfortunate that we have been unable to bring those stakeholders together in a way to resolve these issues.

In some respects, life repeats itself, as was mentioned by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) earlier. The Department of the In-

terior in 1997 under Secretary Babbitt issued rules to deal with RS 2477. Congress did not like it, passed legislation just like we are looking at now to stop the funding of processing under that rule, and Congress said the Department of the Interior should not make any other rules until Congress deals with it.

Now we flash forward to 2003. The Department of the Interior under a different Secretary has issued a new set of rules, and once again we are revisiting the issue of whether or not Congress should be involved in trying to have an inclusive process where we get all the stakeholders together and try to make progress on this issue.

There is no question that there are legitimate claims out there for roads under RS 2477. We all know that. We all know there are roads that are roads. We know there would be some claims out there where we would agree they are really not roads. I would submit to the Members, in fact, that most of the claims in Utah are not controversial. But the problem is that everybody has been scared, everyone has been scared to deal with the non-controversial roads, thinking they would make some precedent that would place them at a disadvantaged position when we deal with the controversial claims.

So we have been involved in one litigation action after another, and one administration promulgates one set of rules, and another administration promulgates a different set of rules, and we are not making any progress.

I bring before the Members tonight an amendment. It is not a perfect amendment. It is not perfect to any stakeholder in this debate. But what it attempts to do is make some progress, some progress in trying to designate the least controversial roads and allow them to move forward. In Utah, we call them class B roads. That is a State classification. But we have adopted that language in my substitute amendment.

These are roads that can be traveled by two-wheel-drive vehicles. These are roads where I would suspect that no one would disagree that there is a legitimate claim. And I am not saying this solves the entire RS 2477 debate, but it is an opportunity to have some people come together on the least controversial part of this whole issue and try to make some progress.

I also want to mention one other component of my substitute amendment, and that is that I specifically talk about the issue of roads that cross private property, and I say that private property rights need to be maintained and that one cannot file claims on that type of land.

Finally, I mentioned earlier the amount of litigation that has been associated with this, and this is not the end of that pattern. It is unfortunate how much litigation we have seen here, and we are going to see it again. We are going to see it on this ruling that came out on January 6, I predict, and I think all of us are a little tired of that. I think we are tired of having that as a way to try to resolve things. It is time for Congress to step up to the plate and do its job.

In 1997, I was not here, but Congress said we have got to do this. Congress did not agree with what Secretary Babbitt did at that time, and it is up to Congress to come together now.

This substitute amendment is a stopgap. It is a stopgap to move forward on one set of the least controversial roads. It is not the solu-

tion. The solution is that we ought to hold hearings, we ought to try to move forward and make progress, bring the interests of all the stakeholders together, and let us make progress and move forward on RS 2477 claims.

RECOGNIZING THE NAPA VALLEY
OPERA HOUSE ON THE OCCASION
OF ITS GRAND REOPENING

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Napa Valley Opera House, as this venue returns to life after 89 years of being closed to our community.

Built in 1879 and now a national historic landmark, the Napa Valley Opera House was the center of community life during its heyday, playing host to luminaries such as Jack London, John Philip Sousa and the legendary soprano Luisa Tetrazzini. Vaudeville shows, masquerade balls and temperance rallies were regular fare. But the hall went dark in 1914, a victim of changing times. As late as the 1980s, the building had reached such a state of dilapidation that it was on the verge of being condemned.

The grand reopening marks the successful completion of a grassroots preservation campaign that began 30 years ago and ultimately saved the structure from the wrecking ball. The fundraising effort started in earnest in 1986, and received a vital boost 11 years later, when Robert and Margrit Mondavi put forward a \$2.2 million challenge grant. To acknowledge the importance of that gift, the main hall has been named the Margrit Biever Mondavi Theatre.

Indeed Mr. Speaker, the return of this dais represents a rebirth of artistic culture that will help bind our community together. Theatre arts no longer shall be rendered a relic of the past but will be celebrated as an institution of the present; binding young and old, and linking those with artistic passion to those who have long forgotten it.

It is not enough for a community anywhere in this great nation to teach the basics of art through the schools. The arts must be actively practiced in the community to make life richer and less confined by a lack of expression that satisfies the soul. In turn the community should never turn its back and allow those institutions that have so enriched their community to crumble to dust. Truly this is a community that will not let the arts languish in such a way any longer.

The Napa Valley Opera House will be a venue dedicated to fostering an appreciation for the theatre arts where it is most important, in our children. The development of a children's series in the theatre that often incorporates hands on experience will give youngsters confidence in their inherent creativity. Fomenting the imagination through positive outlets such as this can only lead to a well-rounded pool of experience in personal expression.

Mr. Speaker, the Napa Valley Opera House will be once again an integral part of the cultural landscape of our First Congressional District and a true treasure for the people of California. It is therefore appropriate that we acknowledge and honor the Napa Valley Opera